

Behind the Mask

[Versión en español](#)

Collecting Your COVID Stories

The NIH has been on the forefront of researching, combating, and providing information about COVID-19 that emerged in late 2019. For all of us at NIH, the virus has impacted our lives in several ways including how so many of us perform our jobs from home. The [Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum](#) (ONHM) is launching a campus-wide initiative to encourage NIH government employees, contractors, trainees, and volunteers to submit documentation about their professional and personal experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While official records will be preserved according to federal regulations, there are no such provisions in place to ensure that personal reactions will be captured that give a more collective account about NIH and its response to the virus. Your contribution will be the primary source material future historians will use to understand how NIH fared and adapted at this critical time.

Please take the time to tell your story!

How to Participate

COVID-19 has affected each of us at the NIH in many ways — whether it has meant suddenly being part of the race to discover therapeutics and vaccines, caring for patients in the Clinical Center, cleaning or maintaining facilities, re-configuring work protocols, adjusting to our changed professional and personal routines, or grappling with our emotions. Here are some suggestions of topics you can address:

- Working on campus during the pandemic
- Teleworking or being furloughed during the pandemic
- The effect that COVID-19 has had on your personal interactions with co-workers
- Opportunities that have emerged due to COVID-19
- Particular aspects of your work that you miss
- How your training and career have been affected
- How you feel the NIH has responded overall to the crisis

Your perspective on COVID-19 is unique and can be communicated in whatever mediums and formats you feel fitting to express your experience. Some ideas include but are not limited to:

- Video
- Audio recordings
- Photography
- Journal entries
- Poetry
- Prose
- Artwork
- Social media posts
- Spreadsheets
- Presentations
- Blogs
- Department-wide projects
- Interviews with ONHM staff

Submit Your Story

Share your reflections and submit any digital files that document your experience with COVID-19 with this [form](#). Answer as many or as few questions as you would like. Be sure to read the permission agreements at the end of the form.

[Submit Your Story](#)

Submission Examples



Danelle Gori, CC

When we left our office building the last time, we all thought it would be for just two weeks, although I wondered if it might be as long as two months. However, I thought about the Lonaconing Silk Mill in MD that was quickly abandoned in 1957, has been kept as it was on the day it closed, and is a well known site for photographers, and I wondered if that's what would happen to our building. Fifty years from now, will tourists want to see our calendars and personal effects from the day we left in March 2020? Janice Solomon, OD



Franda Liu, NLM

Birding was a reprieve from the terrible news of illness, lives lost and economic ruin that spring. Birds brought new life while humans were sick and dying. We avoided the topics of public health and politics on our bird walks. It was truly a type of wilderness therapy. Robin Conwit, NINDS

Donate Non-Digital Materials

Do you have physical items or papers that capture your experience with contending with COVID-19? Send them to us either by mail or deliver them in-person to the Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum once we re-open at:

Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum
Attn: Gabrielle Barr
Building 60, Suite 230
National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland 20814-1460

When donating physical items, please complete our [Deed of Gift form \(pdf, 12kb\)](#). This gives us the permission to use your materials online, in exhibits, and in publications as well as add them to the Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum's collection.

[Deed of Gift form \(pdf, 12kb\)](#)

Terms and Conditions Concerning the Process

We are accepting submissions in languages other than English.

Please do not include personal health information in your submissions for the privacy rights of those involved.

We will acknowledge receipt of your submission.

The Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum has the right to reject any submission or component of a submission that it considers duplicative, inappropriate, or outside the scope of the project.

There is no firm deadline to submit materials as the pandemic continues. We estimate that the submission element of this project will last through 2020.

Submissions will not be accessible immediately for public viewing. After we process and curate the materials, they will be available for historic scholarship. By early 2021, we hope to show many of these digital documents on our website, and we plan to feature a selection of the submissions in forthcoming exhibits and publications.

If you have concerns about maintaining your privacy, questions regarding sensitivity to information disclosed, or dissatisfaction with the way your submission is represented online, please reach out to the Office of NIH History and Stetten Museum at history@nih.gov to discuss potential solutions.

Contact for More Information

If you have questions about how your submission would fit into our repository, accessibility requirements, or need technical assistance, please contact Gabrielle Barr at history@nih.gov.